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FM AMEMBASSY KAMPALA  
TO AMEMBASSY KIGALI NIACT IMMEDIATE  
SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5633  
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS  
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USDAO LILONGWE MI  
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PARIS FOR PERLOW

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR  
TAGS: MASS, MOPS, UG, RW  
SUBJECT: U.S. MEETING WITH RPF MILITARY COMMANDER

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: U.S. REPS MET WITH RPF MILITARY LEADER  
KAGAME IN NORTHERN RWANDA ON 25 FEBRUARY. KAGAME

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STATED THAT THE DE FACTO CEASEFIRE APPEARED TO BE HOLDING, BUT NEEDED TO BE FORMALIZED. THE RPF STRONGLY PREFERS TO REACH A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT TO THE CONFLICT, BUT HE CAUTIONED THAT THEY RESERVED THE RIGHT TO RESUME MILITARY ACTION IF EVENTS ON THE GROUND REPLICATE THOSE OF JANUARY, WHICH TRIGGERED THE RECENT ATTACKS. KAGAME SAID THAT THE RPF WOULD HAVE NO OBJECTION TO THE RESUMPTION OF ICRC/WFP FOOD CONVOYS TRANSITING RPF TERRITORY IN SUPPORT OF REFUGEES. KAGAME ALSO INDICATED THAT SOME REFUGEES WHO WERE DISPLACED BY THE RECENT FIGHTING HAVE STARTED RETURNING TO THEIR HOMES AND FARMS. USDEL TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE MEETING TO INSPECT THE MULINDI TEA FACTORY. END SUMMARY.

3. KAMPALA DCM SHIPPY AND STATE AF/RA'S LTC MARLEY, ACCOMPANIED BY TWO NRA OFFICERS, MET WITH RPF MILITARY COMMANDER, MAJOR PAUL KAGAME, ON 25 FEBRUARY AT THE MULINDI TEA FACTORY IN NORTHERN RWANDA. USDEL WAS MET AT THE RWANDAN FRONTIER, AND ESCORTED TO THE MEETING,  
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BY RPF COMMANDER ("COMMANDER" IS ONE OF FOUR RPF MILITARY RANKS) CHARLES KAYONDO. AT THE START OF THE MEETING, MAJOR KAGAME INDICATED THAT, AS OF THE 25TH, THE DE FACTO CEASE FIRE OR TRUCE APPEARED TO BE HOLDING UP; UNLIKE THE PREVIOUS FEW DAYS WHICH HAD SEEN ISOLATED SKIRMISHES, ON 25 FEBRUARY THERE HAD BEEN NO REPORTS OF WEAPONS FIRING IN ANY OF THE SECTORS ALONG THE FRONT LINES. KAGAME INDICATED THAT WHAT WAS NOW REQUIRED WAS TO FORMALIZE THE MODALITIES OF THE CEASEFIRE: NMOG NEEDED TO INSPECT THE CURRENT POSITIONS OF THE TWO FACTIONS ON THE GROUND, THE RPF WOULD WITHDRAW TO THE PREVIOUS CEASEFIRE POSITIONS WHILE THE RWANDAN ARMY (GRF) REMAINED IN THEIR PRESENT POSITIONS, AND THE NMOG WOULD DEPLOY MONITORS INTO THE DEMILITARIZED AREA BETWEEN THE TWO ARMED FORCES. MAJOR KAGAME SAID THAT NO MEETINGS HAD YET BEEN AGREED TO FOR THE FORMALIZATION OF THE CEASEFIRE MODALITIES, BUT THAT HE WAS CONFIDENT THIS WOULD OCCUR WITHIN THE NEAR FUTURE. KAGAME STATED THAT THE NMOG WOULD NEED TO DEPLOY ADDITIONAL CEASEFIRE MONITORS ABOVE THE CURRENT 50 PERSONNEL, AS THERE WAS NOW MORE TERRITORY THAT WOULD HAVE TO BE MONITORED.

4. CONCERNING THE NMOG, MAJOR KAGAME SAID THAT HE WAS

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SATISFIED WITH THEIR MANDATE, THAT HE WAS IN RADIO COMMUNICATION WITH NMOG COMMANDER MG OPALEYE, AND THAT HE REMAINED CONFIDENT OF THE NMOG'S NEUTRALITY AND OBJECTIVITY. IN RESPONSE TO USDEL QUESTIONS, KAGAME SAID THAT THE REQUIREMENT ON THE GROUND WAS STILL FOR CEASEFIRE MONITORS OR OBSERVERS, AND NOT FOR A PEACEKEEPING FORCE. WHILE HE WAS SATISFIED WITH THE

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OAU FORCE, THE RPF WOULD NOT OBJECT TO ITS BEING AUGMENTED BY UN MONITORS IF THAT WOULD HELP END THE WAR. IF UN MONITORS WERE TO BE DEPLOYED, HOWEVER, THEIR MANDATE WOULD HAVE TO BE AGREED TO BY THE RPF AND GOR, AND COORDINATED WITH THE NMOG AND OAU.

5. USDEL ASKED KAGAME WHAT HE THOUGHT ABOUT THE IDEA OF HAVING A UN TEAM MONITORING THE UGANDA-RWANDA BORDER. KAGAME SAID HE HAD NO/NO OBJECTION TO A UN FORCE ON THE BORDER, BUT THAT HE REALLY HAD NO SAY IN THE MATTER; IT WAS A UGANDAN DECISION.

6. KAGAME SAID THAT THE RPF GREATLY PREFERS A

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NEGOTIATED END TO THE WAR, BUT CAUTIONED THAT IF  
EVENTS IN RWANDA SIMILAR TO THE JANUARY KILLINGS AGAIN  
TRANSPIRED, THAT THE RPF "WOULD NOT PERMIT ITS HANDS  
TO BE TIED" BY INTERNATIONAL OPINION. FOLLOWING THE  
EVENTS OF JANUARY, THE RPF HAD NO RECOURSE OTHER THAN  
MILITARY ATTACKS, AND THEY RESERVED THE RIGHT TO DO SO  
AGAIN IF REQUIRED. HE SAID THAT THE FRENCH TROOPS  
HAVE BEEN REINFORCED AND THAT THEY CONTINUE TO PROP UP  
THE HABYARIMANA REGIME, BUT THAT THE PRESENCE OF THE  
FRENCH MILITARY DID NOT FRIGHTEN THE RPF. THEY WERE  
RWANDANS FIGHTING FOR THEIR HOMELAND AND WERE CAPABLE  
AND WILLING TO FIGHT THE FRENCH IF NECESSARY.

7. MAJOR KAGAME STATED IN CLEAR TERMS THAT THE RPF

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BELIEVES THE APPARENT U.S. INACTION AND SILENCE IN JANUARY 93, IN THE FACE OF RWANDAN PRESIDENT HABYARIMANA'S DISAVOWAL AND DENUNCIATION OF THE 9 JANUARY PROTOCOLS REACHED IN ARUSHA, AND THE MRND AND CDR MASSACRES OF TUTSIS AND OPPOSITION HUTUS, ENCOURAGED HABYARIMANA IN HIS INTRANSIGENCE AND VIOLENCE. KAGAME BELIEVES THAT HABYARIMANA MISTOOK THE LACK OF A FORCEFUL U.S. RESPONSE AS ACQUIESCENCE IN HIS ACTIONS. USDEL STATED THAT THE U.S. DID NOT IN ANY WAY ENCOURAGE OR CONDONE HABYARIMANA'S

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OBSTRUCTIONIST EFFORTS, BUT THAT WE HAD ATTEMPTED TO ADDRESS THE ISSUES THROUGH QUIET DIPLOMACY, JUST AS WE HAD ON OCCASION PRESSURED THE RPF ON VARIOUS ISSUES WITHOUT MAKING A PUBLIC STATEMENT TO THAT EFFECT.

8. KAGAME THEN STATED THAT HE WAS HIGHLY ENCOURAGED BY THE U.S. CONCERN, AS EVIDENCED BY THIS MEETING. THE APPARENT LACK OF U.S. RESPONSE TO THE EVENTS OF JANUARY, AND THE FAILURE TO MAINTAIN (IN PERMANENCE) AN OBSERVER IN ARUSHA, LED MANY RWANDANS TO FEAR THAT THE U.S. HAD WITHDRAWN FROM THE PEACE PROCESS. THIS VISIT, ON THE OTHER HAND, DEMONSTRATED THAT THE U.S. REMAINED ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN THE SEARCH FOR A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION TO THE CONFLICT.

9. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, MAJOR KAGAME SAID THAT HE WOULD BE HAPPY TO MEET AGAIN WITH US REPS IF WE SO DESIRED. HE BELIEVED THAT THE STABILIZATION OF THE TRUCE WOULD PERMIT A SAFE TRANSIT OF THE FRONT LINES FROM KIGALI FOR ANY FUTURE MEETINGS, IF COORDINATED WITH AND ACCOMPANIED BY NMOG.

10. KAGAME THEN TURNED TO GOR ALLEGATIONS THAT NRA BATTALIONS WERE OPERATING AT THE FRONT IN SUPPORT OF, OR EVEN IN LIEU OF, RPF FIGHTERS. HE CATEGORICALLY DENIED THAT THERE WERE ANY SUCH UGANDAN UNITS IN RWANDA, THEN CONTINUED: "WOULD WE NEED THEM TO SHOW US HOW TO FIGHT? THERE ARE NO BETTER FIGHTERS THAN THE RWANDANS. WOULD THEY HAVE TO INCITE US TO FIGHT? WHEN IT COMES TO FIGHTING FOR OUR RIGHTS, NO ONE HAS TO TELL US TO STAND AND FIGHT."

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11. USDEL ASKED IF, SINCE SECURITY CONDITIONS SEEMED TO HAVE IMPROVED WITH THE INITIATION OF THE DE FACTO CEASEFIRE, THE RPF WOULD BE WILLING TO PERMIT THE RESUMPTION OF FOOD RELIEF TRUCK CONVOYS FROM UGANDA INTO RWANDA BY THE RED CROSS AND/OR THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAM. U.S. REPS POINTED OUT THAT THE UN HAD BEEN REQUIRED TO INITIATE CARGO FLIGHTS TO TRANSPORT REFUGEE SUPPLIES INTO KIGALI, AND THAT SUCH FLIGHTS WERE AN INEFFICIENT AND COSTLY MEANS OF OPERATING. KAGAME SAID THAT HE WOULD HAVE NO OBJECTIONS TO THE RESUMPTION OF RELIEF OPERATIONS. HE INDICATED THAT THE RPF CONTINUED TO PREFER THAT ONLY THE GATUNA ROAD

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SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5635  
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BE USED FOR SUCH AN EFFORT, AS THE RPF FULLY  
CONTROLLED THE TERRITORY THAT IT TRAVERSED FROM THE  
UGANDAN FRONTIER TO THE FRONT LINES, BUT THAT IT WOULD  
BE UP TO THE ICRC/WFP TO SELECT THE ROUTE(S).

12. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, KAGAME SAID THAT SOME  
DISPLACED PERSONNEL WHO HAD FLED THE RECENT FIGHTING  
HAD STARTED RETURNING TO THEIR HOMES AND FARMS, WHICH  
WERE NOW BEHIND RPF LINES. HE STATED THAT THE RPF HAD  
ANNOUNCED ITS PERMISSION FOR SUCH A RETURN ON THE  
RPF'S RADIO. WHEN PRESSED FOR NUMBERS, KAGAME THOUGHT  
THAT 50,00-75,000 PERSONNEL MAY HAVE RETURNED. MANY  
OF THESE HAD FLED TO THE SOUTH, AND THEREFORE HAD  
PASSED THROUGH BOTH GRF AND RPF LINES TO RETURN HOME.  
HE STATED THAT THE RPF WAS ATTEMPTING TO ESTABLISH  
FORMAL CROSSING POINTS, BUT MOST WERE NEGOTIATING THE  
CROSSING IN THE VICINITY OF THEIR HOMES. KAGAME ADDED  
THAT THE 7-10,000 REFUGEES WHO FLED INTO UGANDA TO  
ESCAPE THE RECENT FIGHTING WERE ALSO BEGINNING TO  
RETURN TO THEIR HOMES IN RWANDA. (UGANDAN MINISTER FOR  
DEFENSE MBABAZI TOLD THE AMBASSADOR, DCM AND LTC  
MARLEY ON FEBRUARY 26 THAT THE GOU ESTIMATED THAT  
10,000 REFUGEES HAD CROSSED THE BORDER INTO UGANDA AS  
A RESULT OF THE RECENT FIGHTING.)

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13. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION CONCERNING ALLEGED HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES AND ATROCITIES DURING THE RECENT RPF OFFENSIVE, KAGAME DENIED THE INTENTIONAL KILLING OF CIVILIANS, BUT ACKNOWLEDGED THAT COLLATERAL CIVILIAN CASUALTIES WERE CERTAIN TO HAVE OCCURED DURING THE FIGHTING. WHILE REGRETTABLE, HE SAID THAT SUCH CASUALTIES DO OCCUR DURING WAR IN A POPULATED AREA. IN SOME CASES, CIVILIANS WERE CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE IN BATTLES BETWEEN RGF AND RPF FORCES. IN SEVERAL CASES, HE CLAIMED THAT THE RGF HAD ESTABLISHED ITS DEFENSIVE POSITIONS IN IMMEDIATE PROXIMITY TO REFUGEE/POPULATION CENTERS. HE IMAGINED THAT THERE HAD ALSO BEEN CIVILIAN CASUALTIES DURING THE RPF'S BOMBARDMENT OF RUHENGERI. HE CLAIMED THAT IN SEVERAL CASES, RGF SOLDIERS HAD SHED THEIR UNIFORMS, DONNED CIVILIAN APPAREL AND TRIED TO FLEE WHILE STILL CARRYING WEAPONS; ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS WHEN THEY THEN ENCOUNTERED RPF TROOPS THEY FIRED UPON THE RPF, AND DURING THE ENSUING FIRE FIGHT BOTH THE SOLDIERS IN MUFTI AND NEARBY CIVILIANS WERE HIT. KAGAME ALSO SUSPECTED THAT THERE MAY HAVE BEEN CASES IN WHICH FRIGHTENED RGF TROOPS MAY HAVE KILLED CIVILIANS IN ORDER TO SEIZE THEIR CLOTHING IN AN ESCAPE ATTEMPT. KAGAME CATEGORICALLY DENIED THAT THE RPF TARGETED REFUGEE CAMPS, THAT THEY MASSACRED CIVILIANS IN RESPONSE TO THE JANUARY KILLINGS, OR THAT THE RPF FORCED ANY CIVILIANS INTO A BUILDING WHICH THEY THEN BLEW UP OR BURNED DOWN.

14. WHEN ASKED TO COMMENT ON RECENT REPORTS THAT THE  
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GOR HAD CAPTURED A UGANDAN MILITARY TRUCK FROM THE RPF, KAGAME ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE RPF HAD INDEED LOST A VEHICLE DURING THE RECENT FIGHTING. HE CLAIMED THAT IT WAS A CIVILIAN VEHICLE, AS EVIDENCED BY ITS REGISTRATION NUMBER/LICENSE PLATE, THAT HAD BEEN GIVEN TO THE RPF BY A FRIEND IN UGANDA. (COMMENT: THE UGANDANS HAVE ALSO SAID IT IS A CIVILIAN NUMBER. END



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COMMENT) THE RPF HAD BEEN USING IT TO TRANSPORT  
RATIONS TO FRONT LINE POSITIONS DURING THE RECENT  
FIGHTING. WHEN THE TRUCK BROKE DOWN, THE RPF WAS  
UNABLE TO REPAIR THE VEHICLE AND, DUE TO THE TACTICAL  
SITUATION, HAD TO ABANDON IT. AT THAT TIME, ACCORDING  
TO KAGAME, THE TRUCK WAS EMPTY. HE THEN WENT ON THE

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SAY THAT THE SITUATION HAD TAUGHT HIM A LESSON: THE RPF SHOULD REMOVE THE LICENSE PLATES FROM ALL VEHICLES THAT HAD BEEN GIVEN TO THEM BY FOREIGNERS TO AVOID SUCH POSSIBLE EMBARRASSMENT TO THE DONORS. U.S. REP ASKED IF THAT WAS WHY THE TOYOTA PICKUP TRUCK THAT KAGAME WAS USING BORE NO LICENSE PLATES. HE LAUGHED AND SAID IT CERTAINLY WAS, AS THE VEHICLE HAD BEEN PROVIDED BY A BURUNDIAN.

15. KAGAME THEN RAISED THE SUBJECT OF A TEA PLANTATION IN NORTHERN RWANDA THAT WAS OWNED OR MANAGED BY AN AMERICAN. HE SAID THAT THE RPF WAS GUARDING THE PLANTATION AGAINST ANY POSSIBLE LOOTING, THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO LOOTING TO DATE, AND THAT HE INVITED THE OWNER/MANAGER TO COME INSPECT THE PLANTATION OR EVEN PUT IT BACK INTO OPERATION IF HE SO DESIRED. USDEL THANKED KAGAME FOR HIS EFFORTS AND SAID THAT THE MESSAGE WOULD BE RELAYED TO WASHINGTON.

16. USDEL REMINDED MAJOR KAGAME THAT THE GOR WAS ALLEGING THAT THE RPF HAD STRIPPED THE MULINDI TEA FACTORY OF ITS PRODUCTION MACHINERY AND THAT THE RPF HAD DENIED SUCH RUMORS. SINCE THE U.S. REPS WERE NOW AT THE FACTORY ITSELF, WOULD IT BE POSSIBLE TO TOUR

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THE PLANT TO ASCERTAIN THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER? FOLLOWING A LUNCH OF LOCAL STAPLES, KAGAME ESCORTED U.S. REPS THROUGH THE FACILITY. NONE OF THE MACHINERY HAS BEEN EITHER REMOVED OR VANDALIZED, BUT SIMPLY

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LOOKED DIRTY AS THE FACTORY HAS ONE OPEN SIDE, AS WELL AS OPEN WAREHOUSE DOORS AND OPEN VENT LOUVERS. A GLANCE IN THE OFFICES REVEALED PAPERS AND BOOKS STACKED ON DESKS, AS THEY MUST HAVE BEEN WHEN THE WORK FORCE FLED. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF ANY BATTLE DAMAGE (OR VANDALISM) TO ANY OF THE BUILDINGS ON THE COMPOUND. AN EARTHEN BUNKER WAS OBSERVED THAT HAD BEEN CONSTRUCTED NEAR ONE OF THE HOUSES ON THE COMPOUND. IT IS APPARENT THAT THE RPF MAKES PERIODIC USE OF THE COMPOUND, AS THE FRONT ROOMS OF TWO HOUSES WERE CLEANLY SWEEPED AND A WALL CALENDAR IN ONE OF THE HOUSES WAS TURNED TO DECEMBER 1992; KAGAME ALSO ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THEY MAKE UNSPECIFIED USE OF THE COMPOUND ON OCCASION.

17. COMMENT. THE MEETING WITH THE RPF WAS USEFUL IN SEVERAL WAYS. KAGAME SEEMED SINCERELY ENCOURAGED THAT THE U.S. REMAINS ENGAGED IN THE SEARCH FOR PEACE. THE RPF WAS ABLE TO CONVINCINGLY CONVEY ITS DESIRE FOR A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT, WHILE WARNING THAT THEY WOULD RESUME COMBAT OPERATIONS IF REQUIRED. IT ALSO APPEARS THAT THERE MAY BE A DEGREE OF DIVERGENCE BETWEEN THE POSITIONS OF KAGAME AND RPF SPOKESMAN, DR THEOGEN RUDISINGWA. WHILE DECRYING FRENCH ACTIONS IN RWANDA, KAGAME DID NOT DEMAND THEIR WITHDRAWAL AS A PRECONDITION FOR THE RESUMPTION OF NEGOTIATIONS. ADDITIONALLY, WHILE SEEMINGLY CONTENT WITH THE OAU'S

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NMOG, KAGAME HAD NO OBJECTION IN PRINCIPLE TO POSSIBLE UN PARTICIPATION.

18. COMMENT CONTINUED. US REPS WERE ABLE TO DRAW ATTENTION TO U.S. CONCERNS ABOUT POSSIBLE HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES, AND ABOUT THE PLIGHT OF THE REFUGEES (BOTH FOOD FOR THE PREVIOUS REFUGEES AND CONCERN FOR THE RECENTLY DISPLACED). THE POSSIBILITY NOW EXISTS THAT THE ICRC AND/OR WFP CAN RESUME FOOD CONVOYS IN THE NEAR FUTURE, FOLLOWING COORDINATION WITH BOTH THE GOR AND RPF. FINALLY, WITH THE SEEMINGLY SINCERE WILLINGNESS ON THE PART OF KAGAME TO MEET AGAIN, IF NEED BE, WITH U.S. REPS AND TO ENGAGE IN FRANK

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DISCUSSION OF CONTENTIOUS ISSUES, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THE U.S. CAN CONTINUE TO PLAY AN EFFECTIVE, ACTIVE ROLE AS A NEUTRAL BROKER. END COMMENT.

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19. ON RETURN TO KAMPALA, LTC MARLEY AND THE DCM, ALONG WITH THE AMBASSADOR, CALLED ON MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENSE AMAMA MBABAZI, TO BRIEF HIM ON THE MEETING WITH KAGAME, AND TO THANK HIM FOR HIS GOVERNMENT'S ASSISTANCE IN SETTING IT UP. MBABAZI WAS PLEASED IT HAD GONE WELL, AND TO LEARN THE RPF WANTED A NEGOTIATED RESOLUTION. MBABAZI FREELY OFFERED HIS GOVERNMENT'S ASSISTANCE IN THE FUTURE, SHOULD WE NEED IT AGAIN. (OTHER ISSUES DISCUSSED WILL BE REPORTED SEPTTEL.)

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